

## City of Tallahassee Electric Utility Eastern Transmission Line Project

### Project Need:

*Over the last decade, the City has experienced significant growth and development, and a corresponding increase in the demand for electricity. This has been especially true in the fast growing eastern portion of the City and adjacent Leon County where development has outpaced the construction of electric transmission lines and substations. The currently inadequate transmission and substation network in this large and rapidly growing part of the City's service area creates a reliability concern.*

*As a standard design practice for reliability, residential and commercial customers electricity needs should be able to be supplied from a number of alternative substations in the area when a major outage occurs. These alternative substations are all linked together by a transmission line network. When major outages occur, the City must currently rely on the lower voltage distribution system to keep the power flowing to its customers. This lower voltage system has capacity limits, which means we would not be able to keep an uninterrupted flow of power to this area in the event of a major outage. Further, much of this system is currently served by a one-way feed from distant substations, so that a distribution line failure would effectively leave all customers beyond that point without power until the cause of the outage was found and repaired. This level of service is not consistent with our customers' needs or expectations.*

*The only acceptable and permanent way of providing a reliable source of electricity and providing for continuing growth to the eastern part of Tallahassee is to reinforce this area with the proper substation and transmission infrastructure. This infrastructure cannot wait any longer. A temporary substation has already been constructed, and now an additional distribution feeder is needed to support the area load. Growth on the electric system continues and the load is projected to increase at a rate of approximately 3 percent per year in the near future. Considering that substations in the east part of the service territory are approaching maximum load, major problems are likely to occur if the proposed substation and transmission line are not in service by the 2004/2005 winter peak.*

### Project History:

- Initial Work began on the Mahan Route in 2001.
- City Commission approved the construction of an overhead transmission line along Mahan Drive June 13, 2001.
- However, after further consideration of the fact that Mahan serves as a major gateway into the city, and based on the desire to get additional citizen involvement, the construction was postponed until an Independent Route Study could be conducted.
- A Route Study was conducted by EDAW/Exponential Engineering Co. from June 2002 to June 2003.
- Public Workshops were held on August 27, 2002 and April 22, 2003, after 7000 notices were mailed to the neighborhoods, notices were published in the Tallahassee Democrat and signage was provided in the impacted area.
- Public Comments were recorded at both workshops, and the comment period after second workshop was extended until May 26, 2003 to provide additional time for responses.
- The Final Report from the route consultant was submitted to the City in late September 2003.
- The route consultant recommended Route N as the preferred route to carry forward. Route F was his second highest recommended preferred route (see attached Route Map).
- In mid-November, approximately 7600 postcards were mailed to residents notifying them of the consultant's recommendation, staff's recommendation of Route A, and the intent to

present an agenda item to the City Commission requesting approval of the staff's recommended route.

- At the December 10, 2003 meeting, the City Commission gave conceptual approval of Route A with the understanding that a third public workshop would be held in January, the results of which will be presented at the January 14, 2004 City Commission meeting.

### Route Analysis

- The route consultant developed a total of 33 potential routes. Six of the highest ranked alternative routes were presented to the community at the Second Public Workshop.
- After the Second Public Workshop, the consultant reexamined and revised his scoring which caused some changes in the final scoring on various routes. Route AD was one of the highest ranked alternative routes presented at the second Public Workshop. It was subsequently replaced by the consultant with Route N, which was not disclosed to the City until June 27, 2003 (From a public perspective, this route should be viewed very comparable to Route AD, because it utilizes significant portions of that route).

### Estimates

- Overhead Line Construction estimates for these routes are as follows:  

Route A: \$5,400,000	Route E: \$5,800,000	Route F: \$ 6,700,000
Route N: \$8,900,000	Route P: \$10,000,000	Route T: \$12,000,000.
- Estimates for Construction of combination Underground/Overhead Lines; **ONLY that portion of each route that is located on either Mahan or Buck Lake Roads to be installed underground:**  

Route A: \$35,300,000	Route E: \$26,700,000	Route F: \$ 26,900,000
Route N: \$17,500,000	Route P: \$11,000,000	Route T: \$14,700,000

### Recommendation by Electric Utility Staff

Staff does not concur with the consultant's recommendation. Instead, staff recommends Route A for the following reasons:

- a. The survey data from the first Public Workshop had the highest number of respondents, 22 out of a total 65, asking for "a route with the least impact on families, homes, and land, which would mean using only existing right-of-way, main roads, and commercial areas. Route A is the route that follows this request as closely as possible
- b. An overwhelming majority of the responding public preferred this route to the alternatives presented at the second Public Workshop. Below is the compilation of the resident's preference:

Route A	177
Route E	5
Route F	6
Route P	53
Route T	51
Route AD	19
Route O	1
No route	1
Don't favor or don't have a preferred route	7
Information is too much and not relevant for what is needed	1
Don't favor any route as long as the line is underground	1

- c. Route A is the most economical overhead line route.

- d. The use of Route N as the preferred alternative is problematic, including liability terms generally imposed by CSX upon owners of facilities in the railway right-of-way. The City Attorney's Office has recommended against the use of CSX Right of Way for this reason.
- e. Route N impacts approximately 3.5 miles of homes and land not currently impacted by any overhead electric line. Route F impacts approximately 2.33 miles of homes and land not currently impacted by any overhead electric line. All of proposed Route A is currently impacted by overhead electric lines.
- f. This same land for route N or Route F could require the City to condemn some of the property for construction of the transmission line. Route A is proposed to be built on existing right-of-way (with the exception of approximately 450' along the north side of Mahan Drive near Weems Road).
- g. Finally, the survey data suggests that the public perceives Buck Lake Road different in character than Mahan Drive. Mahan Drive is considered a major highway through the community while Buck Lake Road is considered a rural route. The community prefers that it be kept this way. Any route (Routes E, F, and N) that includes the use of Buck Lake Road would impact the rural character.

### **Community Notification of Recommendation**

- a. Approximately 7600 direct mail postcards were sent to residents in the study area on November 12 & 13, 2003, and a press release was issued on November 14, 2003.
- b. A WCOT "Tallahassee Matters" segment on the transmission line project aired November 14 -December 10, 2003.
- c. The City website was updated with the recommendation and provided a form for comments.

### **Results of Citizen Feedback on Recommendation (as of 12/10/03)**

- a. Telephone: 7 calls  
Generally positive
- b. Website: 253 visits  
1 Comment form completed - Positive
- c. Email: 2  
Route A - 1  
Route N or Underground Route A - 1
- d. Homeowners Groups: 5  
Supportive - 2  
Supportive with some Underground on Mahan - 2  
Opposed - 1
- e. Leon County Concerns:  
Overhead/Aesthetic Impact on Gateway  
Health Concerns - EMF  
Risk of Property Devaluation  
Further Exploration of Other Routes

### **Next Steps in Process**

- a. City Staff will meet with Leon County Staff regarding Leon County Commission concerns on 12/16/03.
- b. City Staff will brief Leon County Commissioners (12/10/03 – 1/6/03).
- c. A third Public Workshop will be held on January 6, 2004.
- d. A summary of the third Public Workshop will be provided to the City Commission for consideration of staff's recommended route on January 14, 2004.